

c) REMARKS

The claims are 41, 42 and 45-48 with claims 41, 42, 45 and 47 being independent claims. Support for the amended claims may be found, inter alia, on page 17, lines 10-13; page 19, lines 6-13 and in Figs. 2A, 2B, 4, 10A and 10B.

Claim 41 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Krasnov '762 in view of Hagiwara '210 and Ohmi EP '132. Claim 42 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Krasnov '762 in view of Hagiwara '210, Ando '085 and Ohmi EP '132.

Claims 45 and 46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hagiwara '210 in view of Krasnov '762 and Ohmi EP '132. Claims 47 and 48 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hagiwara '210 in view of Krasnov '762, Ando '805 and Ohmi EP '132.

Applicants respectfully traverse the grounds of rejection.

Prior to addressing the merits of rejection, Applicants would like to briefly discuss some of the key features and advantages of the presently claimed invention. The excimer laser of the present invention has an arrangement in which there are two possible gas flow directions which can be made alternately in the gas supply path structure. The gas supply path structure is symmetric with respect to the throat portion as the center. The laser of the instant invention functions properly irrespective of the gas flow direction. In the claimed apparatus, the gas may be alternately supplied into the gas supply path structure in different directions. When gas flows in one direction, a first port acts as a first fluid inlet, and the second port acts as a first fluid outlet. Alternately, when gas flows in

the other direction, the second port acts as a second fluid inlet, and the first port as a second fluid outlet.

Applicants respectfully submit that none of the references, whether considered separately or in any combination, discloses or suggests the combination of elements now claimed in which gas can be alternately supplied in different directions in the gas supply structure in which first and second ports are symmetrically arranged with respect to the throat as the center. A prima facie case of obviousness, therefore, is not raised. Ohmi, EP '132 at page 8, lines 10-15 shows inlet ports at each end and an outlet port in the center. At page 13, lines 7-12, the inlet port is at the center and the outlet ports are at opposite ends.

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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